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MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
National Security Planning Group Meeting  
November 30, 1984, 1:45-2:45 p.m., Situation Room

SUBJECT: Soviet Defense and Arms Control Objectives (S)

PARTICIPANTS:

The President

The Vice President

The Vice President's Office

Admiral Daniel J. Murphy

OSD:

Deputy Secretary William Taft

CIA:

Director William J. Casey  
Mr. Douglas George

U.S. Representative to the UN:

Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick

JCS:

General John W. Vessey, Jr.

ACDA:

Director Kenneth Adelman

Chairman, U.S. INF Delegation:

Ambassador Paul H. Nitze

Chairman, U.S. START Delegation:

Ambassador Edward Rowny

OMB:

Alton Keel

White House:

Mr. Edwin Meese, III  
Mr. Robert C. McFarlane

NSC:

Dr. Ronald F. Lehman, II

Minutes

Mr. McFarlane opened the meeting by discussing our schedule for dealing with preparations for the Geneva talks. We would begin by

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updating the foundation of information upon which we would build our approach. Today we would discuss the Soviet strategy on arms control and look at the status of Soviet forces and what we expect them to look like in the future. On Wednesday, we would focus more specifically on US objectives in January in contrast to Soviet objectives. Following that, we would review substantive options including questions of how to approach START, INF, space systems, and related issues. We will also look at how to present the United States' view of the relationship of offense and defense. We will stress how strategic defenses can be stabilizing and "why they ought to learn to love defense." He noted that our basic analytical work is complete on START and INF and that our thinking on space had come a long way. He indicated that the participants would receive a decision paper only after we had conducted these foundation meetings. He then turned to CIA Director Casey who introduced Mr. Doug George, noting that Mr. George's presentation had been developed along with Mr. Larry Gershwin. (S)

Mr. George introduced his presentation using a series of viewgraphs. The presentation would describe the Soviet approach to arms control talks, taking into account military considerations, arms control policy, political considerations, and economic considerations. He would then brief conclusions of the CIA paper that had been prepared for today's session. He turned to the question of Soviet offensive systems, noting that the Soviet Union has over 2,500 SNDVs and has a vigorous development and deployment program underway. He noted that the centerpiece of Soviet offensive systems is the large MIRVed ICBM force, especially the heavy missiles such as the SS-18, and he noted that the Soviet Union has a follow-on missile under development for each of their existing types including the SS-18. He stated that the Soviet Union is removing SS-11s, apparently to make room for the addition of new ICBMs, probably the SS-X-25. He noted that the Soviet Union will replace most of its strategic offensive systems in the early-to-mid 1990s, addressing survivability through mobilized ICBMs such as the train-mobile SS-X-24 and the land-mobile SS-X-25. In addition to greater emphasis on survivability, the Soviets will place greater emphasis on diversity, especially in developing a modern bomber force which includes the B-1 equivalent BLACKJACK bomber and the modern AS-15 air-launched cruise missile. He noted that the Soviet Union will continue its build-up of SS-20 missiles and deployments of the SS-21, SS-12 mod 2, and SS-23 in Europe. He stressed that 1985 is a year of decision for the Soviet Union, based on the schedule of their five-year plans. He pointed out that the Soviet Union can live within the SALT II limits for at least another year, but because of their hot production lines, are well positioned to move beyond those limits in the future. Mr. George illustrated this portion of his briefing with photographs of the BACKFIRE and the SS-20 TEL. (S)

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Mr. George continued his briefing by focusing on strategic defense. He noted that the Soviet Union desires to preserve its near-monopoly in strategic defense capabilities; he noted that recently the Soviet Union has been upgrading the Moscow ABM system and has the potential for widespread ABM defenses in the 1990s. It has improved its air defenses and indeed, the Soviet SA-X-12 surface-to-air missile blurs the differences between air defense and ABM. Mr. George stressed that the Soviet Union is doing vigorous research on direct energy and anti-submarine warfare technology. In ASW they are using their manned space mission. He noted that at the present time they have some difficulty countering cruise missiles and advanced bombers, especially Stealth weapons. (S)

Mr. George then turned to a discussion of the Soviet space program, which is large and involves many programs including the Soviet space shuttle. He noted that the Soviet Union has an operational ASAT interceptor which can be launched in as little as sixty minutes after preparations begin. He noted that the Soviet Union has an advanced SDI program of its own, but would likely also respond to the American SDI program with greater resources and offensive counter-measures, including decoys and missile hardening. (S)

Mr. George then turned to the strategic challenge which US programs present to the Soviet Union. The Soviets, he said, are afraid that US gains will erode the advantages which they have achieved. He stated that the Soviet Union has a launch-on-warning capability which the P-II puts in jeopardy. He stressed that the Soviet Union recognizes that no amount of capital that the Soviet Union can invest would permit them to compete successfully with the United States in terms of SDI, because of their inability to develop modern computers at the rate at which they are being developed in the United States. Stealth, B-1, the cruise missiles, the Pershing II, all present problems for the Soviet Union. (S)

He then turned to Soviet arms control objectives. The Soviet Union wants to continue to negotiate but wants progress on Soviet terms. SALT I and SALT II accepted the status of the Soviet Union as a superpower equal, but the Soviet Union retains as its goal compensation for all of the forces of all its opponents, e.g., the British and French. Their goal is to protect their strategic gains while delaying the US strategic response and especially to undercut ICBM modernization and SDI. Mr. George noted that ASAT is the stalking horse for SDI. Mr. George noted that Moscow remains committed to the principle of "equality and equal security," which means that they will continue to focus heavily on the INF issue, particularly this year when the Belgian and Dutch deployment decisions are pending. He noted that Soviet leaders

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plan numerous visits to include a visit by Chernenko to Paris this year and that these will be used for the propaganda purpose of stopping the US INF deployments. He also said that it was quite possible that the Soviet Union would manipulate its SS-20 bases in order to get the Dutch to pause in their decision on deployment of ground-launched cruise missiles. (S)

Mr. George emphasized that the Soviet leadership has agreed on a new course for US-Soviet relations but that Chernenko or his successor will have little leeway to alter the thrust of Soviet strategic programs and arms control policies. The Soviets do not expect major agreements soon, but will use the arms control process to pursue political goals. One can expect the Soviet Union to be very active in trying to influence US policy through allies, our publics, and the Congress. They may well prove quite sophisticated in exploiting differences within the West and in encouraging restraints on US defense spending. Moscow also hopes to inhibit US actions elsewhere, such as in Nicaragua. In Geneva, Gromyko will have a political agenda of setting the stage for the Soviet European visits in early 1985, and his announced goal will be to halt the arms race, especially in space. Gromyko's substantive agenda will focus on stopping SDI through an ASAT moratorium and trying to get an INF moratorium as well. He will be looking for unilateral restraint by the West but will attempt to use SALT II as the point of departure in the strategic area, and again will focus on British and French systems. On modalities, the Soviets probably will have a plan for Geneva but they are likely to expect the US to take the lead in proposing modalities. (S)

Mr. George then turned to economic factors influencing Soviet behavior. Despite difficult economic times, the economic situation is not likely to cause the Soviet Union to forego strategic programs or make concessions. On the other hand, they have an interest in slowing down the pace of strategic arms competition; in particular because they cannot compete with the United States in an open-ended high-technology competition such as would be associated with SDI. (S)

In conclusion, Mr. George noted that the Soviets appear to have achieved successful re-entry into strategic arms control talks. He noted that they believe the process is beneficial to their interests, although they have stated that they do wish to achieve agreements. Clearly, they view the talks as a means to influence US and Allied behavior. These talks in the next year take place as the Soviet Union is deciding on the size, composition and capabilities of forces planned for the 1990s. The Soviet Union looks to arms control to slow down US technological development, while it protects advantages they have achieved. The Soviet Union can live with SALT II for at least another year, and they are well positioned to go beyond its limitations in the near future. (S)

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Mr. George then repeated that the Soviet Union is gearing up for a major public affairs battle, that their emphasis on ICBMs has not changed, and that they are well positioned to go beyond existing agreements in both offensive and defensive systems, and that they have a vigorous space program. He noted that the Soviet Union had just launched their own version of the KH-11. (S)

Secretary Weinberger stressed that it is strategic defense that gives the United States its leverage on the Soviet Union and may prove to be our very best response. (S)

General Vessey emphasized that the Soviet Union gets a tremendous amount of military leverage from its ICBM force and it is important that we develop a counter to that. At the same time, he noted that the Soviet Union is developing diverse strategic forces such as the United States has done. (S)

Mr. McFarlane suggested that we should set aside the detailed discussion and focus on the "big picture." He called upon the President to recall his policy of commitment to a military force structure which the Soviet Union would respect. He noted that the President had in 1980 drawn the nation's attention to the window of vulnerability, and he noted that the American people can see that we have a program. However, he noted that we are still faced with problems in resolving the threat. For example, our problem in getting Congressional support for M-X. He noted that today, the Soviet Union has 6,000 ICBM warheads to our 2,000, and all of ours are vulnerable. The Soviet Union has done all that it could to derail the President's efforts, but we have tried to get everyone to recognize the trends. The President's program in arms control has been to restore a stable balance, but we still have a long way to go, even though we are better off than we would have been had we continued the policies of four years ago. (S)

Mr. McFarlane stated that as bad as it is today, it is going to get worse, and asked what that means for arms control. He stated his view that either you must persevere in getting offensive reductions, or you must defend the United States. It is imperative that the Soviet Union understand that. What the Soviet Union wants is high levels of re-entry vehicles and no defenses for the United States. Mr. McFarlane stated his view that the notion that you must choose between arms control and the strategic defense is nonsense. Strategic defense gives us the capability to restore stability in this century. The other point about SDI is that it permits us to move away from emphasis on nuclear weapons, and this is most appealing to publics. SDI is defensive and it is non-nuclear. (S)

The President asked whether or not the Soviet Union fears our economic capability. (S)

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Mr. McFarlane responded saying that this was different from World War II and that in World War II Congress was on our side. (S)

General Vessey noted that the Soviet Union has a greater military and industrial base but pointed out that we have the lead in high technology. (S)

Secretary Weinberger added that SDI is the key, and that we don't have the time to mobilize an industrial base the way we did in World War II. (S)

The President said that he had one other question. He wondered whether or not deterrence would be enhanced if we made clear to the Soviet Union that we might launch-under-attack, but wondered whether we had the warning capacity to be certain that we would have warning and that we would not be caught by surprise. (S)

Secretary Weinberger noted that there were certain gaps in our radar coverage. (S)

General Vessey added that the gaps referred to attack by SLBMs. (S)

Mr. McFarlane said that we had no ability to rely on launch-under-attack because we do not have the kind of attack assessment capability that we would need to rely on such a policy. (S)

Director Casey noted that launch-under-attack would make SDI look very good indeed. (S)

Secretary Weinberger noted that submarines are very close to our shores and would make it very difficult to execute. (S)

General Vessey indicated that the JCS felt it was difficult to rely on launch-under-attack. (S)

Ambassador Nitze asserted that launch-under-attack is a policy of weakness. (S)

Mr. McFarlane again stressed that we don't have the right kinds of capabilities for such a policy. We don't have the ability to distinguish between attacks on military facilities and attacks on our cities. (S)

Secretary Weinberger said that SDI was the best response to the Soviet threat. (S)

Ambassador Rowny stated his belief that a Soviet attack would be against our missile bases. (S)

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